Kleindienst Hails ITT Settlement

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Acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst yesterday defended the Justice Department's handling of the ITT antitrust case as halting a "pell-mell rush" toward corporate concentration.

Kleindienst said he agreed with Solicitor General Erwin N. Griswold that the agreement with the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. was "not a good settlement but a great settlement."

His spirited defense came as the Senate Judiciary Committee continued its investigation of whether the agreement was related to ITT's offer to subsidize the Republican National Convention in San Diego this year. But his forum was another Senate panel, a subcommittee on appropriations considering the Justice Department's spending requests for the year starting July 1.

His chance came when Subcommittee Chairman Earnest F. Hollings (D-S.C.)—without directly naming ITT—asked whether in such cases there would be "a saving of money in settling it."

Kleindienst, whose nomination as Attorney General is before the Senate and who himself requested the inquiry into the ITT case, said that such agreements produced great saving in time and money not only to the government but to the companies involved." But he went well beyond that.

Noting that as Deputy Attorney General he had authorized the initial complaints against ITT, he gave credit for handling the case to Richard W. McLaren, then Assistant Attorney General for Antitrust and now a federal judge.

Kleindienst said that two previous Attorneys General, both Democrats, had passed up the chance to proceed against ITT because they felt they needed new legislation to be able to break up "conglomerates"—firms that grow by acquiring unrelated concerns rather than businesses in the same field.

McLaren "stopped it in its tracks, this headlong rush of ITT in its conglomerate acquisitions," Kleindienst said.